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CPW Report No. 33 -- USSR

(Apr. 22 - May 5, 1952)

SUMMARY

The May Day celebrations and press anniversary (May 5) claim a considerable part of the central and regional transmitter output. A mute testimony to the unpopularity of Socialist competition is seen in the lack of publicity given to the 23d anniversary of the introduction of that practice (Apr. 29). The new 30-billion-ruble State loan is not yet heavily publicized beyond the official announcement (May 5), and Finance Minister Zverev's speech on the same day discussing its objectives.

Party activities, obviously affected by the urgency of the current sowing campaign, have shifted heavily to the sphere of agriculture. Paper work, directives and the "hustle-bustle" (suyetnya) of interminable conferences are referred to as the common weakness of many Party organizations.

Most of the output on agriculture is designed to prod the creaky collective-farm machine into more action. The frequent discussions of Agricultural Statute violation (narushenie selkhozustava) have now been superseded by criticism of agrotechnical rules violations (narushenie agrotekhnicheskikh pravil), that is, the qualitative aspect of field work, and the failure to take advantage of favorable climatic conditions.

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## CONTENTS

PRESS DAY.....	1
SOCIALIST COMPETITION.....	2
PARTY ACTIVITIES.....	2
AGRICULTURE.....	4

Press Day (May 5), which is actually PRAVDA's anniversary, is dealt with in that paper's editorial on the same day in familiar laudatory terms. Asserting that this newspaper was founded 40 years ago on Lenin's directive and Stalin's initiative (without mentioning, of course, that Bukharin preceded Stalin as editor), the editorial intimates that it has developed under Stalin's direct leadership ever since. The force of the Soviet press, says the paper, is that "it is guided, and its ideology is defined" by the Party. Although the struggle against the "remnants of capitalism" in the people's minds and the "degrading bourgeois ideology" is mentioned as among the chief functions of the press, most of the editorial emphasis is on practical current matters such as the dissemination of leading Stakhanovite experiences and encouragement to greater efforts in general. PRAVDA's tenor is on the whole comparatively mild, and no reference is made to the usual "grave shortcomings" that demand immediate attention.

A Podkurkov article on the subject circulated by TASS (Apr. 27) stresses what the press is "called upon" (prizyvayetsia) to do rather than what it is actually doing. Part of the press, he says, still contains propaganda material that is "lacking in substance". Some papers, it is claimed, are not maintaining the required press standard--articles are published irregularly and their themes are too narrow. Reviews of literature are infrequent and lists of recommended reading material are neglected. Criticism from below (kritika snizu) is, according to Podkurkov, another virtue in which the press apparently does not excel, for only by encouraging such criticism will it be able to "reveal shortcomings...to disclose bureaucrats...and racketeers who bring losses to the State." Infringements on the Agricultural Charter and embezzlement of collective farm property, it is argued, also come within the purview of the Soviet press, and it is on those malpractices, too, that it "must focus its attention." There is much room for improvement in the editorial selection of newspaper material, Podkurkov concludes. Letters from workers are left unanswered and unpublished while the authorship of the published material is confined to a few people:

The newspaper which is filled with articles of a few people and with the materials of their staff members and ignores the letters of workers and collective farmers loses its face as a mass newspaper.

Regional comment on Press Day is diffuse in character but in the main follows the PRAVDA line in that it confines discussion of the subject to general terms, is less critical than usual and lacks specificity.

LITERARY GAZETTE (Home Service, May 5) reproduces excerpts from a testimonial letter to PRAVDA from the Polish TRYBUNA LUDU on the occasion of Press Day:

PRAVDA gives us the best example of how to appeal to the masses...

We also study carefully PRAVDA's information on Party life and international events...

We learn from PRAVDA the Party principles and revolutionary vigilance.

We learn from PRAVDA how to expose the imperialists and the enemies of peace.

Socialist Competition: There is practically no comment on the Socialist Competition Anniversary (Apr. 29) except in a PRAVDA editorial on the same day where it is referred to in passing. The paper, however, takes the opportunity to denounce on aspect of Socialist competition until recently widely publicized in the press and on the radio. The so-called Socialist safekeeping (sotsialisticheskaya sokhrannost), an outgrowth of Socialist competition, meant that State and collective farm equipment and property were assigned to individual workers and farmers for "exemplary" maintenance under their own responsibility. In the post-war drive against frequent technical breakdowns and inept maintenance and handling of machinery, Socialist safekeeping was introduced as a method designed to achieve that end. It was in a way a form of Socialist competition for tidiness and better maintenance of equipment which is now defined by the generic term of "production culture" (kultura proizvodstva).

That line has obviously been changed now, and PRAVDA refers to it as "an artificially imposed novelty" (iskusstvenno navyazyvaemoye novshestvo) and wrong practice which in effect absolve the department heads and other economic leaders of their legal responsibilities. This "thought-out enterprise" (nadumannaya zateya), the paper says, merely serves to detract the attention of the workers from genuine Socialist competition and is conducive to a sort of "depersonalization" (obezlichka), that is, a division of responsibility, which is said to be contrary to Soviet law.

The only regional reference to Socialist Competition Day appears in a PRIDUNAYSKAYA PRAVDA editorial on Apr. 29, but it, too, treats the subject inferentially and in a different context.

#### PARTY ACTIVITIES

Business ability (delovitost), according to Yakubov of the Azerbaijan Communist Party (Apr. 24, not broadcast), is one of the essential requirements that many Party members are lacking. This, he says, is particularly evident in a number of Azerbaijan Party organizations where many of the officials are simply unfit for leadership. The "art of prevision" (iskusstvo predvideniya), a sine qua non of Communist business ability, is said to be still alien to a sizable part of the leadership of Party-political work. Implicitly referring to Communist addiction to all sorts of conferences and meetings, Yakubov speaks in scathing terms of the officials who can talk their way out of anything:

We still have all sorts of chatter-boxes and promise-makers who are capable of drowning any live issue in their talks and hustle-bustle of conferences.

#### Russian version:

U nas eshche ne perevelis vsiakogo roda boltuny i 'obeshchalkiny', kotorie sposobny v razgovorakh i zasedatelskoy suyetne potopit luboye zhivoye delo.

What some Communist officials "fear like fire" (boyatsia kak ognia), it is claimed, is a checkup on the implementation of their own decisions. No amount of paper work or directives will ever do the job on hand, and the belief that a mere order will secure its execution is said to be erroneous. The Oblast Party Committee of the Nagorno-Karabakhskaya Autonomous Oblast, says Yakubov, fits that pattern. Measures for the improvement of livestock-breeding, the main industry of the oblast, had been discussed and adopted 18 different times but never put into practice. The result was a complete failure of the livestock plan. The

reason for that is that the Oblast Party Committee "has been running...at idle speed" (rabotal...na kholostom khodu), never bothering to make sure whether its numerous directives and decisions are implemented. Such officials, says the author, usually evolve into a kind of "petty fussers" (deliagi-krokhobory) whose activities are detrimental to the State and the country's economy. It is against that type of shortcoming, he concludes, that the Party must wage a relentless struggle.

The reluctance to check the execution of Party decisions is also the subject of a Polyakov dispatch from Voronezh Oblast (Apr. 26). The Oblast Party Committee, he says, frequently does not know about the fate of its own decisions, or finds out about them too late. Citing a few incidents to substantiate the claim that Party officials as a rule prefer to confine their activities to paper work, Polyakov asserts that the "tendency to shy away" (stremlenie otmaknutsia) from a thorough checkup on the way decisions are carried out is still prevalent throughout the oblast. Such a state of Party affairs, he says, "cannot be considered as normal" (nelzya priznat normalnym).

Checking fulfillment (proverka ispolnenia), says MOLOT editorially on Apr. 26, is not taken very seriously by a number of rayon Party organizations. This is evident, for example, in Kirov Rayon where non-fulfillment of Party decisions is often revealed through plan failures. This point, however, is not amplified beyond the remark that "instances of cheating the State" (fakty obmana gosudarstva) have also been noted in the rayon. Another case in point is the Semikarakovskiy Rayon Party Committee. Violation of Party and State discipline (narushenie partiynoy i gosudarstvennoy distsipliny) are listed as some of its "many serious shortcomings." Between May 23, 1951, and Feb. 13, 1952, that Party Committee is said to have uncovered numerous shortcomings in the livestock industry on four different occasions, but the only steps taken to remedy the situation were, as the editorial puts it, "warning, showing and demanding." Needless to say, such supervisory activities did not contribute to greater progress: the 3-year livestock plan was a failure, and "losses of communal stock" were incurred. Unfortunately, the paper concludes, this sort of Party behavior is not confined to the mentioned two rayons alone.

Discussing the activities of the Political Departments (politotdely) of the Kuybyshev railroad line (Apr. 25), Yakhnevitch declares that many of them are still "trailing in the tail-end of events" (pletutsia v khvoste sobytiy). Here, again, paper work (kantseliarschina) is referred to as the bane of Party life. The Political Departments, it will be recalled, were instituted during the last war to enforce martial law on the railroads which, incidentally, is still in effect. With almost unlimited power over every phase of railroad activities, these Departments are said to be confining their duties to office routine and "losing contact with the masses" (teryayut svyazi s massami). What they are sensitive to, however, according to Yakhnevitch, is criticism of their red tape (volokita). The case is cited, in this connection, of an official who, after complaining to the Minister of Communications of mismanagement at the Kyubyshev freight depot, was told that "he chose the wrong way...of fighting shortcomings" (formu borby s nedostatkami...izbral nepravilnyu), and had better not repeat it in the future.

The tendency toward isolation from the masses on the part of some unnamed Party and Komsomol organizations is commented on in disparaging terms by DNEPROVSKAYA PRAVDA on Apr. 24. Reiterating Stalin's dictum that in addition to maintaining close ties with the masses and teaching them, the Party must also learn from them, the paper hints that lack of daily contact with the people may impair their confidence in the Party. A number of Communists and Komsomols, however, do not seem to think in such terms: "They are not making any reports to the masses and are not reading lectures to the workers on political subjects."

Petty trusteeship (melochnaya opeka) is another objectionable feature of Party activities, according to Zimina's letter to PRAVDA of Apr. 25 (not broadcast). The Karaganda City Party Committee, says the letter, has arbitrarily assumed that kind of "trusteeship" over its subordinate rayon committees which virtually deprives them of their prerogatives under the Party Charter. This high-handed administration is said to have intimidated the rayon Party organizations to such an extent that whenever they are required to draft any decisions of their own, they merely copy those of the city committee. That, says Zimina, has an adverse effect on Party and economic activities, and it is high time that something be done about it.

There is very little discussion of Party-political education in the period under review. The only complaint of familiar shortcomings in that area is aired in a MOLOT editorial on Apr. 25. Educational progress in the Party school network, says the paper, is hampered by inadequate attendance and a "low level" of instruction. The propagandists in charge of those schools do not get the necessary Party assistance and advice they are entitled to, and, being left to their own resources, are said to be putting in a poor performance. Such an attitude, the editorial declares, causes "extreme harm" to the political education of Communists, and lowers their "ideological and political level."

#### AGRICULTURE

Such familiar complaints as Agricultural Statute violations, inadequate personnel training and others are either de-emphasized or omitted while most of the official attention is focused on the job at hand -- to make the current sowing campaign a success. Attention to the livestock industry is also perfunctory and mostly in the context of fodder preparation.

KURSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 24) lists seven rayons in which the field work is most unsatisfactory and "the principles of agricultural technique are rudely violated." It is evident, says the paper, that this work is "underestimated" in 1952, and yet there is not the slightest reason for "such lack of vigilance" on the part of the agricultural authorities or Party organizations concerned. The paper calls upon all the Party, soviet, kolkhoz and machine-tractor station officials of the oblast to do something about improving the work, reminding them that they all share in this common responsibility and that further dereliction will not be tolerated. Named as the most critical areas of Kursk oblast are Veliko-Mikhailovskiy, Bolshe-Troitskiy, Belgorodskiy, Sudzhanskiy, Sazhenskiy, Oboyan and Rylskiy rayons.

Good organization and intense work, says RADYANSKA UKRAINA (Apr. 25), are the two indispensable requirements for the spring-sowing campaign but neither of them is evident in a number of Ukrainian oblasts:

Dozens of thousands of hectares of spring grain crops have not yet been sown. There is a lag in the sowing of sunflower and sugar beets. The sowing of sugar beets is also slack in Kirovograd Oblast, and the rate of field work is low in Sumy Oblast and especially so in the Polesseye areas. Nearly everywhere there is a lag in preparing fodder for communal livestock.

Faltering performance in the field is also laid to some rayons of Poltava, Voroshilovgrad, and Chernigov oblasts. Despite their large stocks of machines and draft animals, these oblasts are said to have "failed to insure the completion" of fallow harrowing. A late start in grass sowing is attributed to the oblasts of the steppe area, and "the same tendency is noted" in the sugar-beet growing rayons.

The sowing campaign is again dealt with by KURSKAYA PRAVDA on Apr. 26, this time with the mechanical end of it. Many machine-tractor stations, it is revealed, are doing their part of the job "extremely slowly" (kraine medlenno), are not well organized, are wasting time and "disrupting time schedules." The editorial is particularly critical of Novoskolskiy and other rayon machine-tractor stations whose performance is about the worst in the oblast. KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 26) says that poor labor organization, inept utilization of tractors, machinery and draft animals in the southern oblasts of the Republic account for the "late start" in the sowing of a number of crops. The winter crops are not properly maintained, and violations of agrotechnical rules are noted everywhere. The northeastern and western oblasts, where mass spring sowing is to start soon, are warned against emulating one example of their southern neighbors which have "apparently ignored the fact" that meteorological conditions this spring demand the completion of spring field work in the shortest possible time. They are also cautioned against sacrificing quality to speed, a tendency in some unnamed areas, and urged to observe the agrotechnical rules at all costs. Some rayons, says the editorial, are indeed slow in every phase of field work:

Up to now the repair of the machine-tractor park and draft equipment has not yet been completed in several rayons. The preparation of seed has not been completed, and the supply of fuel has not been insured. The field stations for mechanizers and grain growers have not been prepared.

Poor labor organization and unsatisfactory living conditions of the "mechanizers" (tractor drivers and machine operators), particularly women tractor drivers, are referred to as the main causes of the oblast's agricultural troubles in a report from Stalingrad on Apr. 27. Spring field work has already started but many tractors are still idle due to "various technical and organizational" deficiencies. These technical deficiencies, it is further amplified, are caused by poor labor organization which in turn is made impossible by the inadequate living conditions of the women tractor drivers. Violations of labor discipline (narusheniya trudovoy discipline) are reported to be frequent, particularly among the night workers whose work should be controlled but is not:

Many heads of stations and kolkhozes do not adopt measures for creating normal cultural and living conditions for women tractor drivers, and so on.

In most of the oblast's rayons sowing is still carried out at "a very slow pace", and in many places the work has been disorganized and delayed, particularly in the planting of mustard, perennial grasses, roots, sunflower, and sugar beets. The lack of labor discipline among the tractor brigades, the report repeats, must be investigated at once and remedial measures taken. The frequency of machinery breakdowns is said to be seriously impairing the over-all efficiency of the equipment:

The tractor operators work until the tractors break down completely.... It is worth noting that the productivity of every sowing machine in Urupinsky Rayon did not surpass eight hectares a day...

The report also speaks of the inadmissible shortcomings in the supply and distribution of fertilizer on the fields. At least five rayons--Kalachevskiy, Olkhovskiy, Danilovskiy, Ilovinskiy, and Logovskiy--have for some unexplained reason discontinued manure-spreading operations "despite the fact" (nesmotrya nato) that they are still far behind the plan.

A number of agricultural rayons need a little prodding, according to MOLOT (Apr. 27), because "they allow last year's mistakes to be repeated." Cotton planting is again being delayed and the most "favorable agrotechnical season" is being wasted. Cotton, says the paper, is needed just as much as grain and metal, yet "many brigades are still idle and tractor drivers are not fulfilling their assignments." Kagalnikskiy, Neklinovskiy, and Proletarskiy rayons did not get started with their field work until a few days ago. In Orlovskiy, Anastasievskiy, Mechetinskii, and Kuybyshevskiy rayons cotton planting "is carried out in a disorganized manner" and agrotechnical rules are being violated in Kuybyshevskiy, Tselkinskiy, and Salaskiy rayons.

ORLOVSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 27) speaks in derisive terms of the "noninterference policy" (politika nevmeshatelstva) still maintained by a number of rayon, kolkhoz, and machine-tractor station officials. In 1951, they are reminded, their respective areas did not do so well because of a late start in the spring sowing, and last year's experience has apparently "failed to benefit" these officials this year:

How is one to tolerate such a reckless attitude to the harvest when at the height of field operations many tractors...are still standing at the farmsteads?... Feeding and harrowing of winter grain and sowing of grain crops have still not begun in Glazunovo, Yelets, Krasninskiy, and other rayons.

KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 27) names Stariy Krym, Kuybyshevo, and Alushta rayons as containing backward collective farms where spring field work is "not proceeding satisfactorily." The paper calls upon the local Party organizations to look into the agricultural situation and put an end to the prevailing sluggishness in the mentioned areas. Passing reference is also made to Agricultural Statute violations said to be noted here and there, but the point is not amplified. The only other mention of statute violations appears in a broadcast from Tbilisi. ZARYA VOSTOKA (Apr. 23) complains that "not all" (ne vse)

rayon Party and Executive Committees are taking measures to prevent violations of the statute. It intimates that even now, at the height of field work, a relentless struggle against all forms of statute violation is "an urgent task" (neotlozhnaya zadacha) of all Party organizations.

The livestock industry is discussed briefly in a RABOCHIY PUT editorial on Apr. 24. Many rayons, it is stated, have not yet fulfilled the 3-year livestock-breeding plan, and the productivity of the stock "continues extremely low." No more details are offered but the editorial warning against a repetition of last year's mistakes is indicative of the chronic nature of the shortcomings under discussion.

Compulsory Insurance: A broadcast from Dnepropetrovsk (Apr. 30) urges all the collective farms and private citizens of the oblast to reveal all their properties to the organs of Compulsory State Insurance, and "not to allow any mistakes." Subject to compulsory insurance in the case of kolkhozes are all the collective farm buildings, livestock, produce and fruit. With the exception of the last two items, the same law applies also to the property of private citizens.